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Historic Highways of America. By ARCHER BUTLER HULBERT. Vol. I. Paths of the Mound-Building Indians and the Great Game Animals; Vol. II. Indian Thoroughfares. (Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clark Company. 1902. Pp. 140, 152.)

THE first feeling of the reader is that the two monographs of the series here presented lie too far in the remote haze of the prehistoric to be a fair test of the whole. Reference is confined to the Smithsonian reports of delving into mounds and early Indian works. These are supplemented by a few testimonies of "the oldest inhabitant" or pioneer remembrancer. The fact that the last part of the second volume, where the story comes so near the authentic beginnings of history as to concern travel into the trans-Alleghanian districts, impresses one as becoming more trustworthy is perhaps a good omen. When the author comes in later volumes to such present means of travel as the Erie Canal and the Cumberland National Road, no doubt this unsatisfactory uncertainty will become certainty and fact.

A certain disappointment will also be felt because the series promises to be rather a plea for the study of local highways than the fruits of such investigation. The task is described as "a long-neglected" subject; the pleasure of "such out-door occupation" is described; and possible candidates are assured that "the field-work required demands little or no expense and is not without pleasure and fresh romance." Such a plea that a given work should be done might properly have found audience in a monograph with a suitable title rather than in a series supposedly presenting the results of such labor. It is true that an exhaustive study of so vast a field would have grown to encyclopedic proportions; but the question is raised whether the result would not have been more satisfactory even with one topic thoroughly done. We should then have had a last word, a thorough and satisfying verdict, instead of a series of essays under the editorial "we," with comparatively few authorities consulted, a series which barely "blazes the way" through the woods of conjecture, leaving the surveyor and road-maker still to follow.

Another result of beginning the series at such an early stage, or making it so extensive that the commencement must be almost prehistoric, is that the author is compelled to assume the pre-defensive. Instead of instructive statement, he is forced into argument and pleading. "Perhaps," "possibly," and "it is probable" are the fruits of the comparative method in history. Such words as the following illustrate the author's method: "Fortunately, one last piece of evidence which will more than make up for any lack of conclusiveness which may be laid to the charge of the preceding arguments." It is to be hoped that this attitude may disappear from the later and less conjectural periods.

Occasionally the deduction from the arguments may be questioned. The maps of prehistoric remains in Ohio and Indiana, for instance, do seem to prove the thesis set forth that the builders lived in the river valleys; but the map for Illinois shows the larger number by far to be

located on the Mississippi River. Indeed, omitting those built beside the Mississippi and the Illinois, few are to be found within the state. It is also difficult to reconcile the limits of the feeding-grounds of the buffalo, as described in one place from "as far as the eastern extremity of Lake Erie" and "only in the upper portions of North and South Carolina did it extend beyond the Alleghanies," with the statement in another place that "the three great overland routes from the Atlantic seaboard into the Central West were undoubtedly first opened by the buffalo." Is it not more likely that the northern route, from the Hudson through central New York, was an exception to the rule, and this very exception caused it to be developed much later than the others? Another case of *non sequitur* is likely to be charged where testimony is introduced to prove that "a significant fraction of the ancient works lie [sic] along the general alignment of present routes of travel" and thereby that ancient and modern highways followed the same general routes. Were these not accidents due to the surveyor's compass, and the exception rather than the rule? Perhaps the most noted of the ancient works in the Ohio valley is the "Serpent Mound." It lies on a bluff and at an extreme point. No ancient way could possibly have passed through or even within view of it.

Where the author turns aside from the proof of his theories and writes of the early highways and the experiences of early wayfarers thereon, he writes very entertainingly. Even his own experiences in tracing old roads, contained in a chapter entitled "Leaves from an Explorer's Note Book," although many would have hesitated to insert it in that undigested form, are most readable. The difficulty here is that one can cover but a small portion of the United States in his individual experience. That the author lives in Ohio or is closely associated in his experiences with that state and has had access locally to the written experiences of early travelers in that state together with Kentucky and Tennessee is apparent on nearly every page of the second volume.

Even in this restricted field of investigation many interesting facts are brought out. The Indian trail always sought the high ground, where a firm footing might be obtained at all seasons. It crossed streams near the mouth, where sedimental bars afforded some relief from the deep waters. The choice of trails varied with the various seasons and such accidents as cyclones, forest fires, and floods. The author is inclined to believe that the "Indian rocks," the "Painted Post," and other devices supposed to have been employed by the aborigines to mark trails were inventions of the whites. The Indian was too well versed in wood lore to employ such artificial means of direction.

So well marked are the trails by indentation in the soil and by descriptions of pioneers together with local traditions that the author is able to classify them into hunting, war, portage, river, and trade trails. The five great trails which connected the Atlantic coast plain with the Ohio valley are located and described, chiefly by means of old maps, several of which are introduced with good effect. Other tabulated proof is in-

troduced to show that the old Indian trails became in convincing number the first military highways, furnishing another link in the author's chain of evidence to show the antiquity of present routes and that such routes dependent on topography have remained unchanged from the remotest time of travel.

It is perhaps allowable to raise the question whether subsequent volumes might be improved in style by dropping the mannerism of introducing so many quotations with the inverted phrase, "Writes a Kentucky historian," or "Writes Mr. Allen." The absence of the editorial "we" would assuredly conduce to a smoother diction, and the same result would no doubt follow a longer period of digestion and assimilation of the whole for the sake of harmony both of statement and of style.

EDWIN ERLE SPARKS.

The American Merchant Marine. By WINTHROP L. MARVIN.
(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1902. Pp. ix, 444.)

THIS is a sketchy and interesting volume whose "declared purpose is to present both the romance and the history of the American Merchant Marine." It has few of the qualities of history, for facts and deductions tumble over one another in the most confusing manner. Again (p. ix) "the author, out of this experience, has reached some positive convictions of his own, but it has been his honest effort to make these pages interesting and informing rather than controversial." As hardly ten pages pass without urging some controversy in a passionate way, this unconsciousness of any historic sense is naïve, for the writer is candid. He opens with a spirited account of colonial ship-building and commerce, and the customary blundering condemnation of the Navigation Acts of Charles II. No other single cause helped the commercial and the whole industrial growth of New England so much as these Acts. He finds causes for the decline after 1720, but fails to notice the overwhelming cause in the enormous expansion of paper currency. He fails to describe the disastrous effects of the Sugar Acts.

In privateering, whale-fishery, and deep-sea fisheries the author is at home; and he brings out the true romance of the seas. The mail-ships and the clippers are depicted finely, and the high qualities of American navigators as well as ship-builders are duly set forth. The amazing statement is cited from the *New York Herald* that a "Black Ball liner" had "made 116 round passages in twenty-nine years without losing a seaman, a sail, or a spar" (p. 222). The Civil War in its inevitable consequences, and the change from sail to steam in the later nineteenth century, brought problems pretty difficult for all historians, and especially hard of treatment by our author's methods. The "ruin" of commerce, so freely ascribed to Toombs and his fellow-congressmen, had many causes, and the true results were not always apparent. Notwithstanding disasters from Confederate cruisers, our wooden fleet was pretty well sold. The capital of the Forbeses, Vanderbilts, and others brought fair returns, when laid down in iron rails, in spite of the "ruin."